

3040918-EG - EDG PRE-SUBMITTAL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes approved – 7/5/2023

Date: June 22nd, 2023

Record number: 3040918-EG

Attendees:

Staff

Alisa Johansson – Land Use
Sonja Brown – Zoning
Clayton Scott – Solid Waste
Jackson Koch - SDOT
Ray Ramos – Seattle City Light

Applicant

Chaohua Chang – Project Architect
Victor Sung - Project Team Member
Mei-Jui Lin – Project Owner

Project Overview – Chaohua

The project is to demolish the existing apartment building to construct an 8-story mixed-use building with underground parking. The ground floor will consist of a 1,000 sf coffee shop and spaces accessory to the residential use such as lobby and circulation. The upper levels will have around 50 units of studio/ 2-bedroom apartments. The lot is adjacent to Mercer Street and the parking entry will be coming through the alley.

Seattle City Light – Ray

We have overhead high voltage lines on both Mercer St and the alley. The survey provided was pretty busy and I was not able to get all the elevations but the key is that 14 feet clearance is required. It is important to get an application in to SCL as soon as you can because a vault is likely needed due to the size of the 8 story structure, elevator, 50 units, commercial component. It is going to require a vault whether it is coming from the alley or Mercer street, it is something that could be determined by SCL engineering. To make for a smooth process, apply early with your electrical loads, meet with SCL and have a pre-app meeting to talk about electrical and they will provide you with the route of service, where your service is going to be coming from underground to the building. With the electrical load they will be able to size the vault you will be needing. It is a good time to talk about meter rooms, how many meter rooms you will need, I think it is every 3 levels according to our requirement book. Those are all things that can be addressed in the pre-app meeting. For the Owner, something to think about is constructability. How to build and work around high voltage lines. If you are going to have cranes. Crane power requires more than 14 feet clearance, I think it is 20 feet by L&I. These are all things to consider when planning for your project so there are no surprises, and you can better budget for potential construction cost. Working clearance, construction clearance, temporary power, all would need to find feed points. Utilize the pre-app meeting with SCL to not just talk about service to the site, but also to go over any constructability issues down the line.

Question from Architect: 14' radius clearance includes eaves, railing, architectural elements of the building?

Response: Any part of the building structure, any architectural features, downspout, gutter, eaves, balcony railing all must be outside of the 14 feet clearance.

Question from Architect: Since this project has a basement and we are still at a preliminary stage, to be safe would you recommend saving some space for meter or electrical equipment.

Response: Yes, can't be below one grade, so if you have parking and you put transformer vault in the basement below, it can't be more than one floor below based on the 0751 standard provided. If we don't have standard clearance to get a truck to deliver transformers in there, there is what we call an equipment transportation agreement, where we put it on the property and it is the customer's responsibility to get the transformers into the vault room.

Question from Architect: Do we need an electrical engineer to help design for this project?

Response: You need someone to help calculate the electrical service size, to calculate the load. The project is mix-use so you have the residential units assuming there will be electrical appliances, electric heat. Then you have the type of businesses whether it is restaurant, or retail. Another thing to think about is how many electrical vehicle stalls you are going to have, that all factors into the total electrical load the project is going to need.

Question from Architect: So do we need an electrical engineer or would an experience electrician be able to help?

Response: Depends, there are electricians that do commercial work, and there are electricians that only work on smaller residential projects. It just really helps with your planning, the better information you can provide us, the better we can size up the vault and provide the requirements for your project.

Remarks

- Link to the application provided to the chat
- Encourage early application to SCL
- If impact to the right of way, not sure if SIP is required but it will be good to have utility information if one is needed

Solid Waste - Clayton

Will start the types and amount of service recommended for the building and then can go into the code requirements for storage and staging. For a 40 Unit Apartment and 1,000 sf commercial space, we will be recommending on-site collection for 2-yd dumpsters or smaller from the alley. Currently, the solid waste room is shown from the alley so that is perfect. Driver will just walk into the storage space to access the containers and service them. Considering the number of floors for this project, I would also recommend on floor solid waste access to make sure residence has access to garbage, recycling, and food waste on each floor.

In terms of capacity:

Residential

Garbage: 4-yd/ week

Recycle: 6-yd/ week

Food & Yard Waste: 1x 96-gallon cart

Commercial

Garbage: 1-yd/ week (1-yd per 1,000 sf of retail space)

Recycle: 1-yd/ week

Food & Yard Waste: 2x 96-gallon cart

For code requirements, the storage space itself needs to have a minimum dimension of 416 sf. That includes a minimum horizontal dimension of 12 feet. So at least 12 feet wide and 12 feet long. The storage space is leveled and hard surfaced. And located to minimize noise and odor impact on occupants and the neighbors. For the staging of the containers that are 2 cubic yards and smaller, required to be within 50 feet of the truck collection location. Since your storage space is right off the alley it should be okay. Please note that distance on the site plan. Also for dumpster collection, no more than a 6% slope is allowed in the path. And a minimum 14' overhead clearance for truck that services the containers.

Question from Architect: Since our solid waste storage is right against the alley, the storage actually serves as the staging location, it's the same right?

Response: That's correct, yes. However, need to make sure if there are powerlines in the alley or other situations that 14 feet overhead clearance is met. And also double checking that alley slope is within the 6% because while the driver can go in and grab those containers, if the slope to the alley is above 6%, they won't be able to pull it all the way out to the truck as it will be too steep. If it is more than 6%, we can work with you on other solutions. If it is right at 6%, it will be okay.

Remarks

- Make sure to submit check list for designers and solid waste site plans to us
- Provide email in the chat – SPU_SolidWastePlanReview@seattle.gov

SDOT – Jackson

First thing, 3rd Ave is urban village neighborhood and not in a pedestrian zone, so there is no requirement for an 8 feet sidewalk. The requirement is for a 6 feet sidewalk, and a 5-1/2 feet planting strip. It does look like you might have a little bit of additional space, so if you do want to proposal replacing the sidewalk with a wider one, we'd definitely be open to that, we just ask that you maintain 2 feet clear from the back of the sidewalk to the property line. As long as you are meeting those minimum standards, if there is an additional feature you want to put in the right away that's certainly an option.-EG

Questions from Zoning: Does this development go all the way to 3rd or just the parcel on the right?

Response from Architect: It is just the parcel on the right.

Response from SDOT: If it is just the parcel on the right, then you can disregard that then but the same increment requirements apply.

There is existing curb sidewalk planting strip street trees, so you wouldn't be required to install those. That also means most likely you won't need a SIP, unless you have a water main extension, PSD storm

drain extension, or sewer main extension. If any of those are noted on the PAR, or if you get your WAC from SPU, and they require a main extension, then you will need a SIP. Otherwise, you probably would not need a major permit from SDOT for this project.

Question from SDOT: Also, I see you have that existing alley apron shown, I don't believe there is any alley dedication required, is that correct Sonja?

Response from Zoning: Correct, no alley dedication required.

In that case, you wouldn't need to be doing any additional paving on the alley so we wouldn't be looking for you to replace the alley apron. I would say if you can avoid damaging that during construction that would be best. Because if you did damage it, it would need to be replaced. And once we are looking at replacing it, I would be concern about the proximity of that pole to the alley apron. The clearance standard is 7-1/2 feet and it is right next to the alley apron. So as long as you don't touch it, you wouldn't need to move the pole. But if the apron were to be damaged and you had to replace it you might get into a more tricky situation.

Question from Owner: In front of the building, there are many trees, sometimes it gets too tall to the powerlines. But those trees do not belong to us, so we actually cannot do anything. I have called many times, first they think it is City Light managing it, but City Light said no it is City's tree. How are we going to take care of those trees?

Response: They are SDOT owned and maintained trees. SDOT has an urban forestry division that permits and manages the trees in the right of way. You will most likely need to do a site visit with the urban forester for this district to talk to your landscape architect or your arborist to see what would be possible for trimming or pruning the trees. When they are under high voltage powerlines, there is an opportunity sometimes to prune them to avoid conflict but it really needs to be an onsite conversation. I will give you the contact information and tell you the type of permit you will need to apply for. The quickest way to get a conversation going is to apply for an urban forestry permit for the site. Then you will get a reviewer assigned for the project and you can speak with them directly.

Question from Owner: When you look at the alley, right next to it is Taco Bell and KFC. You can see that their grade is much higher and has a fence. A couple months ago, a truck hit it. I've sent an email to the property owner and have not received a response. Current situation is kind of dangerous without knowing when the pole supporting the fence is going to come out. So I wonder if there is any department we can talk to about this safety concern?

Response from SDOT: Depends on if it is in the right of way or not, it does not look like it is in the right of way. If it is in the right of way, then it will be a SDOT enforcement to get it fixed. And they are pretty responsive about enforcing for safety hazards. If it is not in the right of way, I believe it will be a SDCI issue.

Response from SDCI: If it is private property, then it is up the owner of the property to make the repairs. If it is a safety concern, then someone who is familiar with the situation can file a complaint to our code compliance department and they will compel the neighbor to make some type of arrangements to eliminate that hazard.

Remarks

- Jackson to provide contact information from the Urban Forestry Department and link for the urban forestry permit application.
- There is no alley dedication, no major street improvement would be required.

SDCI – Sonja

My only comment is to make sure you are allowing ample space for amenity area that is required at ground and also for landscaping that would be required at ground.

Question from Architect: Amenity area is 25% of the lot area and half of the amenity has to be on the ground is that correct?

Response from SDOT: Correct.

Question from Zoning: What Zone is this?

Response from Land Use: MRM

Other than that, the site plan looks pretty good.

Question from Zoning: Entry to your garage, how many levels down does that need to go? And where will the parking be located? Will it be on this level or is there another level below?

Response from Architect: Only 3-1/2' grade change from the alley to the parking garage and only one level of parking.

After a quick check on the amenity requirements, since we are in a MR zone, it's not 25% of the lot area, it is 5% of the area in residential use. The alley needs to be 16 feet wide which it is and you are taking access off the alley.

Question from Zoning: For approximately 50 units, how many parking spaces will you be providing?

Response from Architect: 6 parking spaces, depending on which design option but the current one shows 6.

Question from Architect: For Zoning, the MHA floor area, from what I've learned is almost identical to gross floor area except the underground parking can be exempt from the MHA calculation is that correct? Since we have a partial basement where partially it is underground and partially it is above ground, so I don't know if we can exempt the portion that is underground?

Response from Zoning: Per SMC [23.58C.040.A.1](#), payment is made on the total gross floor area in the development, excluding the floor area of parking located in stories, or portions of stories, that are underground.

Question from Architect: Payment option and Performance option. Can we do a half and half? For example, if the minimum requirement to provide low income unit lets say is 5, but the owner only wants to provide 3, can we use the payment option to make up the difference?

Response from Zoning: Yes.

Remarks

- Sonja to verify MHA underground parking exemption requirements on partially underground basement.
- Question posed during design review discussion: May bicycle parking be located in the basement, accessible by elevator? Yes, it can. Long-term bicycle parking does not have to be located on the same level as the entrance to the garage and does not have to be accessed only by the garage ramps if located on the same level as parking.

Design Review – Alisa

Prepare three massing options, one of which must be code compliant. If you do need to request departures, make sure you have at least one option that doesn't include any departures.

Next Steps:

- After the meeting, please send the notes for approval. Staff approval typically takes one week.
- Once the minutes are approved, they will be posted to the Seattle Services Portal. Alisa will also provide email notification.
- Follow the steps on this page to submit your EDG packet:
[Design Review - Administrative - SDCI | seattle.gov](#)
See also specific steps here: [How to Submit Your EDG Application – Help Center - Seattle Services Portal \(zendesk.com\)](#)
- Alisa's first cycle review typically focuses on ensuring that the packet is complete. See ADR checklist for assistance in preparing a complete packet:
[Seattle SDCI - Early Design Guidance packet requirements](#)

Alisa went over an informal memo with suggested priority guidelines to consider. Alisa states that she welcomes the applicant team to collaborate on the priority guidelines for the project, if other guidelines not listed in her memo are a better fit for the project's goals. Keep in mind that all guidelines remain applicable.

What Alisa reviews in Cycle 1:

- Packet completeness.
- Design concept clarity and discernibility.
- While also considering: Sufficient information to support an option and provide appropriate guidance related to that option.

Please refer to the ADR checklist for specific requirements for each option.

Please Consider:

- Architectural presence, ie., since the project is not strictly on a corner, but more of a mid-block site, how will the building fit into the urban fabric of the block? Consider the existing neighborhood character—both new and old buildings are present, with an eclectic mix of materials and styles. The applicant team should consider how this building can fit into this context and contribute to it in a positive way. (CS2-A-2, CS2-B, CS2-C-2, CS3-A-1, 3 / Uptown DC2-1)
- Alisa notes that some of the properties across the alley to the east are somewhat “underdeveloped” for the zone, allowing sight lines to the building from 2nd Ave, further east.

This should be considered in your development of the east-facing facade. (DC2-B-1, 2 / Uptown DC2-2)

- Connections to the street. Alisa encourages retention of the residential lobby entry and coffee shop entry on Mercer St and furthermore appreciates the coffee shop wrapping into the alley as shown in Option A, given the sightlines to the building noted above. Consider how the entries to the building and how the façade treatment along Mercer contribute to activating the commercial space and lobby. (PL3-A-1, PL3-A-2 / Uptown PL3-1)
- Consider how the bike facility can be easy to access, and convenient and safe for users. The Uptown Supplemental Guidelines also mention a preference for short-term bicycle parking in the right-of-way, potentially with modified racks that are colorful or otherwise contribute to the building's identity/placemaking. (PL4-B-2 / Uptown PL4-2-a)
- Human scale, how do we break down this 8-story building into something that is understandable to a pedestrian? The Uptown Supplemental Guidelines do have some specific commentary on tall buildings, please review and incorporate. (DC2-C-1, DC2-D-1 /Uptown DC2-5)
- Make sure building materials are high-quality and that they will weather well in our unique climate. (DC4-A / Uptown DC4-1)
- Consider how the signage for the residential development and coffee shop could be incorporated into the overall design concept. Although signs are not permitted under the MUP, it's worthwhile to consider how signage will be incorporated into the overall design concept to create a cohesive whole. (DC4-B / Uptown DC4-2)